1:Sanders Z-54 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

491 457 At times, one comes across an unusually good road system in what would at first seem to be an isolated area and learns, as in the case of the area south of Volos, that emigrants from these communities, who went to Egypt, sent back large sums of money for the construction of these roads, which were built at heavy cost per kilometer because of the great amount of masonry work needed. Near Xourichti, in this same area, we 443 came across a small unpadlocked building on the main road connected by a path with the village seen in the distance. We learned that this was the place where villagers left their money and orders for purchases desired from Volos. When a truck driver passed that way he would stop, pick up the money and the orders, and do the necessary shopping in Volos. When he came back he would leave the purchases in the little house, perhaps toot his horn or flash his lights, and people from the village would come to get [577] their new possessions. There were no thefts, no shortchanging, in this area of mutual trust where, before World War II, it was safe for a young woman to walk anywhere through the mountains at night unattended.

491 178 In Epirus, across Greece from this Volos area, life is lived in a different historical and physical setting. In order to learn what effect a new road had upon village people there, we went to the village of Tsepelovo. On August 20, 1952 — only a few months prior to our visit — the first automobile had arrived at the village, using the road that had been built to open up a large forest to be exploited for the people's benefit. As we sat in the office of the community council and talked to the village secretary, we learned what the road had already accomplished for this village. The [494] first advantage mentioned was the lowered transportation costs, for the [804] hauling charges per oka (2.8 pounds) by truck are only one fifth or one fourth of those by donkey. When pressed to give other results, the secretary put it this way:

[342] Now we can build homes with sand and cement; formerly it was too expensive to carry these in by animals. Formerly we built our stone houses with lime and mud as mortar, and that is why they tend to crumble so quickly. [438] Here we produce about 14,000 okas (about 20 tons) of walnuts each year. We received little for them because of the transportation charges; now the merchant comes here in a truck and pays us cash and gives a higher price. Today we can also sell our lumber because, before the road came, we couldn't very well strap long boards to the donkeys.

[484] We used to spend twelve-and-a-half hours going by animal to Ioannina, the only large city nearby. Now we do it in two-and-a-half hours by car. The grocer [735] can sell fresh goods, whereas formerly he had only staples. Although we had great riches here, we also had great poverty so that beggars would go from house to house. The road reduces this inequality. Many of our men who had no other income earned much money working on the construction.

[758] In case we get sick we can be carried down by car and not have to ride a donkey.

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

main crop because the peasant can harvest them before the great heat of summer descends and the countryside lies parched and torpid under the blazing sun.

Land Reform (Thessaly)

Attica was selected as the best illustration of land ownership in Greece, but Thessaly, with the richest land in Greece, almost selects itself to illustrate modern Greek land reform.[13] The size of the farm holding in Thessaly averages just over eleven acres, which is the highest of any province: the figure is less than ten acres in Macedonia, Thrace, and Central Greece; just over five acres in Epirus and the Peloponnesos; and less than five acres on the islands. No wonder that now and then I encountered what can best be termed "land-hungry peasants," particularly where they thought that the government, through its program of land redistribution, was in a position to turn over to them at a reasonable figure the fields of some estate not yet fully reduced to the proper size set by the land-reform law.

This was the case in 1953 in Thomai, a village not far from Larissa, the capital city of Thessaly. I was driving the director of agriculture in Larissa out on his inspection trip through the neighboring area where a severe rainstorm had damaged the nearly ripe wheat. The road, stretching for miles between grain fields, was headed in the direction of Trikkala and passed the Larissa Forest Nursery, whose sign linked it with the Marshall Plan. Farther on, in recently harvested grain fields, a few gleaners were bending over the golden stubble in the hot sun, gathering their winter's bread supply like Ruth who gleaned in the fields of Boaz. In rich Thessaly, there are few gleaners now, but the unwritten law permitting gleaning still exists for those poor villagers who need it.

During the drive the discussion centered about the problem of land reform. The director was reluctant to visit Thomai because he had not yet received any final instructions from Athens to help him answer the questions he knew the villagers would ask about some promised increase in their land. The Land Reform Law of 1917 had boldly attacked the problem of the big estates, and its gradual application had eliminated tenancy throughout most of Greece by 1930. Around 1922 the influx of refugees, with their desperate need for land, speeded up the redistribution. This law still permitted certain classes of landlords to hold up to 500 acres although requiring them to dispose of acreages above that amount. As the result of further government action in 1952, the archbishop of the national church had agreed to the sale of the monastery estates, which accounted for a little more than one fourth of the 1.5 million acres to be turned over to private proprietors in this new redistribution program. Another type of landlord living in Larissa had formerly owned about half of the rich Thessaly plain; he had given up most of the land, keeping the 500-acre maximum holding.

1:Sanders Z-5.4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

[297]

[VI]

The Changing Life of the Shepherd

A year in Greece puts one on intimate terms with sheep and goats. They are everywhere. They dart across the highway before a speeding car and raise their tails in a contemptuous gesture as they leap to safety across the ditch into a field; they form a fitting part of almost every landscape one wants to photograph; and they provide the country's chief meat supply as well as the white *feta*, or soft cheese. Their wool and hides are also important sources of income to the shepherds.

There is nothing particularly glamorous about the Balkan sheep of which those in Greece are typical. They have a narrow, long tail and wool mixed with hair. C. S. Stephanides in his article, "Sheep — Man's Best Friend in Greece," writes: "The Greek sheep has a small skeleton; narrow body; short but strong legs, well-fitted for long journeys; the ability to feed on poor roughage, to withstand hardship; and early maturity." There are eleven leading breeds, seven of these being island sheep, which give much more milk, meat, and wool than the mainland sheep.[1] This is explained by the isolation of the islands, the comparative small acreage of some, and the poverty of the farmers there which forces them to keep but a few sheep and to select out the very best. The superiority of their livestock has come about through centuries of such selection. As a matter of fact, those mainlanders undertaking scientific improvement of their flocks import the island sheep for breeding purposes.

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

therefore the guiding hand in local affairs. But in Greece I found no such use of the secretary's role. He generally considered himself a servant of both the state and the local people. In this Attica village the secretary said: "I do all the difficult work. I am kept so busy that I even work at night. Recruiting for the army, for instance, is done through me. I was awakened at five this morning by a man who wanted a certificate. I am also head of post and telegraph here. This is an unusual job for a secretary but the local government couldn't afford such an official and asked me to take on the job. I reckon I must work eighty hours some weeks." But he seemed to be thriving on his job.

When I inquired more carefully into what the council does, I learned that, in addition to collecting the taxes, it has the problem of determining what families are poor enough to qualify for welfare assistance. The president and two other citizens comprise a committee on social welfare and classify families according to need. The two citizens had been selected by the Ministry of Welfare from a list of nine local people nominated by the president, and they serve two years. The poor people are officially listed according to categories A, B, and C, which are based on family income and size of family. The poorest (A category) will get free medical care, free hospitalization, free maternity service, and free drugs at the expense of the Ministry of Welfare. Those in category B are entitled to the same advantages, but have lower priority in the event sufficient facilities are not available to all. Those in C category must pay for their drugs, but at reduced prices, with the price difference being made up by the Ministry of Welfare. Of the 560 families in this village, one half were in one of the above categories. Since everybody in a village knows everyone else's business, there is much discussion of the fairness of the list. A person in need comes personally to ask for help, but he may be removed from the list at the end of three months when the names must be reviewed.

Around Volos, in the villages on Mount Pelion, I found emergency welfare needs handled on a much less bureaucratic basis. The commandant of gendarmerie for the Volos area learned in March 1953 that many families in the villages on the eastern part of Pelion lacked food. Unlike those in the Attica village, these people had made no complaints. They ordinarily live on returns from olives, apples, chestnuts, and some potatoes, but storms had destroyed their chestnut and apple crop to the extent that they had received little income the previous autumn. By March, they were without funds to buy bread. Part of their poverty could also be traced to the number of times their villages had been pillaged by the guerrilla bands which had earlier operated in that area. Their clothes were a pattern of patches. They kept little livestock because pastures were lacking and because any lambs produced did not mature early enough to be sold at Easter.

The commandant, in view of these circumstances, asked help from the

1:Sanders Z-5 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

746 representative of the International Red Cross, who arranged with the organizational officials in Athens for an immediate distribution of rice, sugar, and molasses (for children). Momentarily, the representative also secured money for bread, telephoning from Athens to the commandant to buy the bread locally. The Red Cross representative had expected the commandant to buy about eight hundred one-oka loaves of bread, but he had different ideas: "Why not give the people flour and cut down the expense of the salt, water, and manipulation that goes into the baked bread?" So he bought nine hundred and eighty okas of flour and persuaded the flour mills at Volos to contribute another two tons. He also handled the problem of transportation with originality. Since these eight villages are remote, the trucking costs to them are high. The commandant, suggesting that the distribution be at four points, appealed to the local transportation cooperatives to supply the trucks after the Union of Trucks had voted to help. Then the drivers agreed to donate a day's free labor, with the "day" totaling sixteen hours for many of them before the distribution was completed and the trucks were safely back in Volos.

But the role of the village notables should not be minimized. Although the commandant had made a trip through the district to look personally into the condition of many families, he depended upon the president, the priest, the teacher, and the gendarme to prepare the list of the needy in each village. The role of the president came to the fore at the distribution points, to which he brought some men and pack animals. The commandant explained in great detail to each president the basis on which the distribution was being made, who had made the contributions, and what families were to receive how much. The supplies for each village, when weighed out from the trucks, were turned over to the community president. He then supervised the loading of the pack animals and headed the animal train back toward his village. Once arrived, he was to see that the distribution was carried out according to instructions.

Such an experience leaves many impressions: the deep personal interest which the commandant of gendarmerie showed in the welfare of the people in his area; the dignity of the village presidents who asked very intelligent questions to be sure that they properly understood the instructions about distribution; the tattered clothing worn by these quiet, almost impassive villagers. And here, as always in Greece, one sensed deeply the beauty of the natural surroundings: the mountains where patches of snow still lingered, the dark glades through which the road sometimes wound, the occasional olive groves and chestnut forests, with lively pedestrian traffic ready to greet one every few hundred yards. Down on the plain, on a sunny afternoon, the meadows were full of a profusion of wild flowers so delicate in color and stamina that they die soon after they are plucked or after the hot sun of late April and May beats down on the unprotected plain. On

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

our way back to Athens the next day as evening began to fall, we saw Mount Parnassus, snow-topped, off to the west, and knew that beyond it lay Delphi and its sacred shrine. In an ancient land, peasants of today were still wrestling with the problem of hunger; and generous people — Greek officials, millers, truck owners and truck drivers, and supporters of the International Red Cross — were expressing a common humanity. Village presidents, or local government in action, were the final link between the outside world and those in need.

Other trips, however, left one in a different mood. In the Peloponnesos, as in many parts of Greece, I found villagers who did not feel very kindly toward their community president, even though they had elected him. In one place a peasant, not without a trace of prejudice, remarked: "My brother-in-law was president of the council when the village road was built. He and the council decided how many days men of the family had to contribute and we got the job done. But our president now is a poor type of political leader. He plays favorites. He does not promise anything for the village as a whole; he has no concern for a much-needed bridge at the place where your car almost got stuck crossing the stream."

In another village, an old man who had spent five years as a young man in the United States complained: "In community affairs we have to elect a president who is 'in keeping' with the government in power, or else we get left out. But many of our village presidents take revenge on those villagers who disagree with them. In the States, if you are a Democrat nobody cares." When I asked in what ways the president could take revenge, he said that the president could make unfair work assignments to a community voluntary-labor project, make unequal distribution of welfare goods, and create difficulties for a man trying to get a loan through the cooperative.

But in many ways the community council has some control over the president because it can outvote him on crucial issues. In fact, a council will frequently have real discussions since each member feels well informed on village matters, which is all they are supposed to discuss, and can reflect the ideas of his friends, followers, or his coffeehouse clique. As one Greek official said, "The community council is a lively element in village life. The only point to remember is that council members are not educated enough to measure up to their tasks."

Some brief insight into how this process works is found in the case of Stavroupolis, a village whose coffeehouses were treated at some length in the preceding chapter. According to John Photiadis:

> Stavroupolis and the three other villages which form the Stavroupolis community are incorporated, with their government located in Stavroupolis. This government consists of an unpaid nine-member council elected by vote every four years, and a salaried mayor. For specific projects and activities, special committees are appointed from the council members and sometimes non-coun-

2:Friedl E-5 (1955-1959)1963 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

since farmers in neighboring villages whose cotton fields lie adjacent to those of Vasilika's pump owners often want to hire the pumps. Here again, the rent income helps to defray the cost of the machinery.

Work is begun in the cotton fields shortly after the winter rains abate in February or March. Like the wheat fields, the cotton fields are sometimes plowed with horses. But, apart from the two farmers who own tractors, a number of farmers believe that the increased yield from the deeper plowing a tractor furnishes is more than worth the cost of renting the machines. Planting is ordinarily done by hand, but in 1956, a few farmers owned machine planters, and several farmers were borrowing them to try them out for the first time. The utilitarian and essentially nontraditional attitude to farming characteristic of Vasilika's inhabitants is illustrated by what one of the farmers had to say about using a machine planter. "I've planted half of my forty *stremata* of cotton by hand and the other half by machine to see which will turn out better. It's an experiment, you see." The machine planter must have been better, because in 1961 the same farmer had planted all his cotton by machine.

A few rows of maize are planted in the midst of the cotton fields to provide feed for chickens. Boys and young men like to roast and eat a few ears of corn out in the fields in late August, but corn is not considered proper food for human beings, and eating corn bread is believed to be a sign of dire poverty.

Once the cotton starts to grow, in late May and June, the hoeing begins. This is arduous labor which includes weeding, chopping up the weeds, and arranging the chopped weeds around the cotton plants as a mulch. Hoeing is done by the girls and women of the household, although men sometimes help. If a farmer has as many as twenty *stremata* planted to cotton, it is at this point that he may begin to use hired labor. Generally, the women of the village who are not busy in their own cotton fields are called upon first. These are the wives and daughters of the shepherds and the wives and daughters of the few farmers who have small enough land holdings so that their women have time left over after hoeing their own fields. When these supplies of excess labor are exhausted, farmers turn to relatives and non-kin in the neighboring villages.

The hired women who came from other settlements used to live in the house of the farmer who employed them, and used to be fed by him as well. In 1961, however, the farmers were reporting a system they much preferred—the use of tractors and trucks to bring women from the neighboring villages in the early morning and to take them home again in the evening. This obviated the necessity of housing and feeding four or five girls at a time during several different periods in the course of the cotton growing season (cotton is weeded and hand cultivated at least twice and sometimes three or four times during the season). The women of Vasilika's households were especially pleased at the change, because although they enjoyed having the company of the hired women, who danced and sang in the evenings, they very much disliked the additional work involved in housing them. After a long day in the fields, the farmers' wives and daughters had to prepare a hot evening meal for the work crew and, before dawn each morning they had to pack the bread, cheese, and olives which would provide a morning collation and a midday meal in the fields. The de-

2:Friedl E-5 (1955-1959)1963 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

planting that season accepted the fact with resignation. The agitation died down after several days and the matter was not mentioned again.

Let us return now to the other officials and organizations that have responsibilities concerning the village as a whole. Law enforcement in Vasilika is in the hands of two *aghrofilakes* (rural policemen). They are appointed by the nomarch and are responsible for preventing and detecting animal trespass in the fields and thefts of produce as well as of personal property. They also watch sales of cotton and tobacco and can therefore furnish information of value for estimating produce taxes. The village police are sometimes called in to deal with disorderly conduct or with any physical violence which threatens to become serious. The *aghrofilakes* wear grey uniforms with green trim and are easily distinguished from the other villagers. Vasilika's police used to be *kseni* (strangers) who came from two different neighboring villages, but in 1961 the men were natives of the village who were relatives of the then current president.

There are two other semigovernmental village-wide organizations: the agricultural cooperative credit society, and the welfare committee. The villagers elect a president of the credit society, whose signature is necessary on almost all requests for credit, since the Agricultural Bank works in conjunction with the cooperative. The village priest, the president of the council, and the president of the agricultural credit society constitute the welfare committee. They attest to the financial need of a villager who wishes to avail himself of free government welfare services. In most cases, however, the village families who occasionally need help receive irregular gifts of food and clothing from other village families, and their plight is not considered a matter for joint village action. When several cartons of surplus American butter, cheese, and powdered milk reached the village, it was the priest who distributed the goods. On that occasion, the daughter of one of the recipients brought some butter (which the villagers usually do not use in cooking or baking) to a neighbor's daughter, who contributed eggs, flour, and sugar. The two girls spent a busy afternoon mixing a cake according to a half-remembered recipe given them by an extension worker some years before. The cake was not a success by any standards for such confections, but the girls were satisfied because they had produced a European-style sweet.

The Village School

The village school is supervised and controlled by the Ministry of Education in Athens. The teacher is appointed by the ministry, which also prescribes the curriculum. In Vasilika, in 1955–1956, the school had thirty pupils distributed unevenly among the six grades. The first grade had the largest number of children because its ranks were augmented by the children of the shepherds, some of whom had had no previous schooling and were assigned to the first grade regardless of age. A man originally from the Peloponnesus taught the children. He had married a woman from Parori, who was herself one of the

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Recreational Function. Recreation, as such, in organized form is not found in the villages and yet there is plenty of recreation, which the farmers enjoy throughout the year. For older people to play ball or athletics seems very childish. Certain traditional customs handed down from generation to generation provide both group, inter-village, inter-neighborhood, inter-relative and family recreation. For example when a baby is born the whole larger family rejoices and have feasts, when the baby is baptized the whole neighborhood and relatives are invited to join in the ceremonial feast. When a member of the family gets married the whole village participated with their musical instruments. The marriage feast lasts three days, until everybody is exhausted from children of five years to grown ups of 65 years, by dancing, eating and singing. Another recreation is the celebration of their name days. It is surprising to note that only the name day of the male person is observed more than the female name day.

Then come the numerous religious holidays at dif /34/ ferent seasons when inter-village recreation takes place. The village that celebrates its saint day provides shelter and food for those that came from remote villages. At these holidays or Saint days takes place something similar to that of the county fairs in the United States. After the church service the people gather around the church yard and, with their colorful dresses, dance in a big circle while musical instruments play their local songs. Sometimes as many as 250 people dance together. The intensity and the length of the holiday depends on the importance of the Saint.

The year's most important recreational holiday is at Easter period. Three days are devoted for its celebration and the whole village, friends or enemies eat at the common table, drink from the common glass and dance at the common village dancing place. This is the time of the year when all those that have plenty give to those that do not have. The ovens of the village fill the village with the ordor of roast lamb, cookies and other kinds of pastry. The wine cellars open and the best drinks are offered to the good

/73 cont./ 178
fertilizing methods or rotation methods or introduction of new 476
legume plants or a new variety of wheat. As a rule, their effect 242
on the farmers is great with definite results. 874

Thus the future farmers of Megali Vrisi, working cooperatively, felt the need of adopting new methods and passing on to others the results of their /74/ investigations. It is surprising to know how effectively the cooperative project has tied up these fellows in undertaking to do other jobs useful for their village.

The individual project idea was a failure. People who live [621]
in the same village, still under the patriarchial type of family life and whose problems are so closely interwoven, cannot help but cooperate and support whole-heartedly cooperative work. 476
This very same idea led those boys to build a community hall 621
and a stage for theatrical shows. The whole structure was built [345]
by personal work and what money was saved from theatrical shows [533]
at Christmas. The group learned Christmas carols and sang them [735]
to every house in the village. The contributions from this event [314]
were used for the poor of the village. The small reforestation [185]
project which was started by this group has led to the development [526]
of the "Day of the Green", at which day everyone in the village
planted a tree on the hill.

The yearly athletic day event that provides an enjoyable gathering for the village was planned by the young men.

/75/ One can easily foresee the future of such a community [874]
which will be handled by people who learned to cooperate so well in their youth. This vocational education meant more to the lives of these young men than what they got from the grammar school.

Invasion of adult education. The Greek government, feeling 873
great responsibility toward these people, who during the wars of [658]
1912-1913, 1914-1918, and 1920-1922, lost the chance of attending schools, provided special evening lessons in each village. The lessons were handled by the teacher in the local school and thus many of these men and women had a chance to learn how